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PATENT APPLICATION

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:

MANABU YAMAZOE ET AL.

Application No.: 09/459,479

Filed: December 13, 1999

For: IMAGE PROCESSING METHOD
AND APPARATUS, IMAGE
PROCESSING SYSTEM, AND
STORAGE MEDIUM

Examiner: Scott A. Rogers

Group Art Unit: 2626

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Technology Center 2600

December 5, 2003

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

DEC 10 2003

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INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Sir:

In compliance with the duty of disclosure under 37 C.F.R. § 1.56 and in accordance with the practice under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.97 and 1.98, the Examiner's attention is directed to the documents listed on the enclosed Form PTO-1449.

The references were first cited in a Japanese Office Action Dated September 12, 2003 regarding the basic Japanese Patent Application No. 10-355256, a counterpart of this application. For a concise explanation of the relevance of the non-English documents JP 5-094523, JP 8-181865, JP 10-134178, JP 7-121702 the Examiner is directed to the accompanying English abstracts. Also note that Japanese Patent No. JP 5-094523 corresponds to U.S. Patent No. 5,684,600 also enclosed.

REMARKS

JPA 5-094523 discloses a technique for deciding a degree of emphasizing processing or smoothing processing, and for executing that processing on an object image using a fuzzy theory inference based on differences between a computed standard deviation for each pixel value and the surrounding pixel values in the object image.

JPA 8-181865 (U.S. Pat. No. 5,684,600) discloses a technique for detecting halftone dot areas and black character areas in an image and then executing a smoothing process and an edge emphasizing process for the image on the basis of each detected area.

JPA 10-134178 discloses a technique for averaging out and enhancing the brightness of an image by converting the brightness of the image using a brightness averaging table. Additionally, brush patterns may be added to the image in proportion to the brightness of each pixel in the image.

JPA 7-121702 discloses the selecting and setting, manually or automatically, a filtering technique corresponding to the magnification of an image, and then executing a suitable filtering process based on that selection for a distinct part of the image.

Applicants contend that the present invention is not anticipated or rendered obvious by the above cited references for at least the following reasons. The present invention involves modifying an image on the basis of both a signal obtained by extracting an edge of the image and a signal obtained by reducing the number of tone levels of the image. None, of the above cited references contain such features. Additionally, Applicants submit that the above references are silent regarding a decoding process for decoding a block encoded photograph image, as disclosed in the present invention. Furthermore, the references fail to disclose an image processing method that includes the

executing of a monochrome effect mode for an image after executing an illustration mode for converting the image when a user's instruction designates both the illustration mode and the monochrome mode.

CONCLUSION

Each item of information in this information disclosure statement was first cited in any communication from a foreign Patent Office in a counterpart foreign application not more than three months prior to the filing date of this paper.

It is respectfully requested that the above information be considered by the Examiner and that a copy of the enclosed Form PTO-1449 be returned indicating that such information has been considered.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address given below.

Respectfully submitted,



Attorney for Applicants

Registration No. 20613

FITZPATRICK, CELLA, HARPER & SCINTO
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, New York 10112-3801
Facsimile: (212) 218-2200